TC1443-10

Statement on East Timor

To the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization

August 9, 1990

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House of Councillors, Japan

Honorable Chairman and distinguished delegates,

I am Yasuko Takemura, a member of the House of Councillors of the Japanese Diet. I express my gratitude to the Committee for giving me this opportunity to make a statement today on behalf of 87 members of the all-party Diet Members Forum on East Timor in Japan.

"Environment, Peace and Human Rights" has been the theme of my political career, and I have made it my duty to listen to voices of the weak and to make them heard at the Diet.

On March 29 this year, I took up the issue of East Timor at the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs in the Diet. Regarding Japan's position on East Timor, a Foreign Ministry official stated that the government was observing the negotiations mediated by the United Nations Secretary-General. As you may know, the Japanese government has still not recognized the incorporation of East Timor into Indonesia.

Then I further posed a question whether the world map hung in the room of the Director of Asian Affairs Bureau contained any line dividing East Timor from Indonesia. The

answer then was it didn't. But since then the Foreign Ministry has corrected this mistake and now all of the maps and globes in the ministry have a line showing East Timor as distinct from Indonesia.

In other words, the Japanese government accepted what our Diet Members Forum has repeatedly claimed regarding the territorial integrity of East Timor, and it has showed a more serious and sincere attitude.

The resolution adopted by the United Nations Human Rights Sub-Commission last year clearly states that the "East Timorese people" are one of the "parties concerned" "to co-operate in order to achieve a durable solution." The Diet Members Forum highly appreciates all the efforts of mediation made by the Secretary-General. However we believe, as we repeatedly expressed in past sessions of this Committee, that representatives of the people of East Timor should be included in the negotiations since it is they that are the primary party involved.

Close observation of the present situation in East Timor does not lead us to conclude that there have been any improvements there. We continually receive reports on oppression and violence inflicted upon East Timorese by the occupying forces, such as arrests and torture of pro-independence demonstrators after the Pope's visit to the territory in October last year, or cruel beating up of young people who peacefully made a petition to the United States ambassador for Indonesia Mr. Monjo in January this year. The latter incident was reported in a nation-wide monthly

magazine in Japan with a photo taken by an Australian tourist. We were very shocked by the violence against the young people.

These facts indicate that pro-independence actions by East Timorese will increase in the future. Therefore we believe that the United Nations should make the utmost effort to speedily assure that these voices calling for self-determination are reflected in negotiations toward a settlement.

I am also deeply concerned, as a woman, about the family planning program being forcibly carried out in East Timor. I am fully aware of the importance of family planning in general for an adjustment of ever-growing population on the earth. The implementation of such a program, however, should be based on the spontaneous will of women who are acceptors, and their rights should be fully guaranteed.

In East Timor the family planning program is forcibly carried out, in spite of the fact that one-third of the population there have died under the Indonesian occupation. Here we would like to draw your attention to the fact that compared to regions in Indonesia, in East Timor the proportion of the use of Depo Provera, which is still a controversial contraceptive regarding its side-effects, is considerably high.

Timorese women are deeply afraid the Indonesian family planning program is a form of genocide. It was against this background that we received a disturbing report last year

that high school girls were injected with a contraceptive, which is supposed to have been a vaccination for preventing neonatal tetanus.

If these allegations are true, isn't this genocide against life yet to be born? I am deeply concerned that this artificial and dangerous family planning program has been gradually infesting the bodies of young Timorese women.

Japan occupied East Timor for three and a half years during World War II, and now it has become the largest financial sponsor of the present occupier, Indonesia. We, 87 members of the Diet Members Forum on East Timor, together with citizens who are involved in this issue at the grass-roots level, deeply regret our invasion in the past. As we look upon the suffering of the people of East Timor today, we are determined that the same sin should not be repeated.

Today August 9 is the day when an atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki forty-five years ago. It is a day when the whole of Japan prays for peace. I am usually in Japan on this day concentrating my efforts in this nation-wide prayer for peace. But this year, knowing that at this very moment Indonesia is repeating exactly the same sin as we committed in the past, I felt compelled to come here to make a statement before the Committee.

Finally let me conclude my statement by expressing the hope that the United Nations will seize this moment to take a bold, new initiative for peace in East Timor.

Thank you very much.